



# STATE REPRESENTATIVE **CATHY DAHLQUIST** 31<sup>ST</sup> DISTRICT

## 2012 Legislative Review

Spring 2012

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

First and foremost, thank you for the privilege of serving as part of your 31<sup>st</sup> District legislative team. Your trust during these difficult times means a lot to me and my family.

As a first-term legislator, I appreciated constituent feedback. Your calls, e-mails, letters and visits helped me serve you to the best of my abilities. I also drew on my experience on the Enumclaw School Board to find middle ground on K-12 education reforms and to hold strong on the state budget to ensure education was not used as leverage for tax increases.

There were some great accomplishments these past two years, but also some missed opportunities, particularly on job creation policies. However, at every turn my focus was on ensuring the Legislature did what was right for the 31<sup>st</sup> District and the state.

I hope this brief legislative review is informative to you. I welcome your questions and comments on these topics, or others. Please remember I am your legislator all year long. Whether I am in Olympia during the session or around our communities the remainder of the year, I make myself available to meet with groups, individuals, speak at events as well as help constituents navigate state agencies and find services.

All my best to you and yours,

Cathy Dahlquist  
31<sup>st</sup> District Representative

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- Education (*Asst. Ranking Member*)
- Education Appropriations & Oversight
- Rules
- Technology Energy & Communications

# STATE REPRESENTATIVE CATHY DAHLQUIST

## LEGISLATURE PASSES BALANCED BUDGET, REFORMS



Two years, two regular sessions and six special sessions later, the majority party in the House finally decided it was time to embrace bipartisan budget solutions and reforms that will actually balance state spending for years to come.

Neither political party holds a trademark on good ideas. That's why House

Republicans were the first to offer job-creating legislation and balanced budget solutions that would get Washington working again.

The largest obstacle we had to overcome was how to address overspending, over-promising and under-delivering to taxpayers for the past eight years. The reality is government cannot be all things to all people.

The formation of a bipartisan coalition in the Senate allowed minority House Republicans to help shape the debate on spending and taxes. This forced House Democratic leaders to come together and work to find middle ground, bipartisan solutions. The result was true compromise.

We were able to pass reforms that address long-term spending, balance the budget within tax collections and protect education from further reductions. The budget is not perfect. I would have liked to see reforms to programs like General Assistance-Unemployable (now Disability Lifeline) and Puget Sound Partnership, and a healthier ending fund balance.

We passed much-needed government reforms, including:

- A four-year balanced budget requirement to ensure budget writers balance the budget for the current two-year cycle and the next;
- Long-term pension reforms that apply to newly-hired workers beginning in 2013; and,
- A plan to add more choices for school employees and examine how to create greater health benefit plan and cost equity for all school employees.

I supported the government reforms, but more tough decisions remain. There were also good aspects of the operating budget. For example, it did not cut spending for K-12 or higher education. It also did not raise the state sales tax – something the governor pushed for late last year. And, it did not delay payments to school districts or skip a state pension payment – two proposals that were on the table in the regular legislative session.

I am proud of the work we did! We united in tough times and made choices that will benefit the taxpayers of Washington and help get people back to work.

## FUND EDUCATION FIRST PROPOSAL WAS TIMELY



Our state constitution is clear: Education is the "paramount duty" of the state. The state Supreme Court decision in *McCleary vs. State of Washington* in January reaffirmed what many of us already knew to be the case – K-12 basic education is not being amply provided for in the state budget. The solution is to Fund Education First.

That is why I co-sponsored **House Bill 2533** this year. It is a bipartisan measure that would have required budget writers to Fund Education First before any other program or state agency receives tax dollars.

House Republicans have introduced a Fund Education First proposal each year since 2006. This is the first year the proposal received a public hearing. On Jan. 31, students, teachers, education advocates, superintendents, principals and concerned citizens came to Olympia to share their thoughts on the Fund Education First proposal before the House Education Appropriations and Oversight Committee.

Unfortunately, the majority party in the House would not agree to move this bill out of committee. However, I will continue to advocate our children get the first dollar, not the last dime in the state budget.



# 2012 LEGISLATIVE REVIEW



## PUBLIC SAFETY BILL PROTECTS OUR PROTECTORS

In 2011, I sponsored House Bill 1206 to add criminal justice workers, including police officers, prosecutors and other correctional staff, to the list of workers protected from harassment while performing their jobs. Judges and juries already have this protection. It ensures they do not come under undue pressure that may stop them from upholding the law in a fair and impartial way.

I was humbled when I learned this legislation earned me the "Legislator of the Year" award from the Fraternal Order of Police. Receiving the group's highest award for simply doing the right thing by our law enforcement community was a highlight of my first term as your state representative.

Brave men and women put their lives on the line every day to protect us and the least we can do is provide safeguards that give them peace of mind. House Bill 1206 took effect July 22, 2011.



*Jack Simington (right) and Carl Burke representing the Fraternal Order of Police traveled to Olympia on March 7 to recognize Rep. Cathy Dahlquist as the group's "Legislator of the Year."*

## SUPPORTING OUR JOB CREATORS IS CRITICAL TO ECONOMY



*Rep. Cathy Dahlquist receives the Association of Washington Business (AWB) Cornerstone Award from Gary Chandler, AWB vice president of government affairs.*

I was honored to receive the Association of Washington Business' (AWB) "Cornerstone Award" for my votes supporting business-friendly legislation and against legislation that would further erode the state's economic competitiveness.

As a small-business owner, I appreciate all AWB does to protect our state's job creators and get people back to work in this difficult economy. One of the most important parts of my job as your legislator is to advance policies that improve employers' abilities to grow their operations and hire people. The best way to turn our economy around is give people more opportunities to find good-paying jobs.



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*Rep. Cathy Dahlquist with student page Alyssa Goodwin pictured on the House floor in Olympia.*

## LEGISLATIVE PAGE PROGRAM

Each year, students ages 14 to 16 from around Washington spend a week in Olympia serving as legislative pages. Student pages learn about the political process and help deliver documents to legislators and their staff. At the end of the week, students present their own mock bills and hold mock hearings on them.

Students who wish to apply to the Legislative Page Program for the 2013 session should apply as soon as possible because space is limited. Students must have the permission of their school and parents, and be sponsored by a state representative or senator.

To find out more and print the application, visit:

<http://www.leg.wa.gov/House/Pages/HousePageProgram.aspx>.

## CONTACT ME

I make myself available to speak at civic group meetings, attend small group meetings and meet with individuals year-round. Please contact me if you have questions, need a speaker or would like to meet to discuss legislation or ideas for legislation. I look forward to seeing you!

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